

# PROMISING PRACTICE

## EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES | EDUCATION, TRAINING, & SUPPORT SERVICES

Community College of Allegheny County - Pathway to Success in Healthcare



### Discussing employment opportunities early and often enhances the educational experience.

Community College of Allegheny County experienced several challenges after the start of their **Pathway to Success in Healthcare (PSH)** program, particularly in reaching employment outcome goals for students and obtaining post-graduation data. They ascribed this to a lack of communication and relationship-building between students and the employment specialists who educate and facilitate healthcare jobs for program participants. Although the program had strong relationships with healthcare employers, they struggled to communicate available employment opportunities to students.

PSH staff participated in the HPOG Employment Virtual Learning Cohort, culminating in a Roundtable meeting in Chicago where PSH staff networked and shared experiences with other HPOG grantees, gaining fresh ideas and best practices to integrate into their program. The key takeaway from the cohort was that the employment discussion must occur early and often throughout the educational experience.

After participating in the cohort, PSH made several program enhancements aimed at fostering a more direct relationship between students and employment specialists, and tactics for keeping students engaged throughout the program.

The employment engagement now begins at PSH orientation where students are introduced to employment specialists, get their contact information, and receive materials about employment opportunities and resources to help them in their employment search. Employment Specialists are also featured guest speakers during the mandatory Student Development course, outlining upcoming events such as workshops, job fairs, etc.

Monthly “Lunch and Learn” events bring employers to the table, allowing students to learn about available employment opportunities, speak directly with recruiters and HR personnel, and in some cases, apply for positions on the spot. Additional workshops are held 1-2 times per month focusing on developing soft skills and other qualifications for employment.

Ongoing communications regarding employment opportunities are distributed through email blasts and across the program’s social media channels. Moreover, PSH is currently developing a series of pre-employment workshops for incoming students that will serve as prerequisites before beginning formal coursework.

These program enhancements have resulted in a gradual increase in the number of students who successfully find employment after graduation. PSH expects this number to continue to rise by continuing to integrate and enhance the role of employment specialists throughout the program.

**Addressing employment opportunities early and often rather than waiting until students near program completion keeps them engaged on the pathway to success.**

This Promising Practice was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.